Also ignored were 14 Jokers *Byblia ilithyia* Drury, which have all the elements of the aposematic species though with a different mix; this species feeds on Euphorbiaceae and might actually be aposematic. Somewhat ambiguous butterflies were treated with caution; only 58% of other Nymphalidae were taken within the ten seconds, at that with an average delay of 6.5 seconds.

Out of 26 female Diadems *Hypolimnas misippus* L., a wonderful mimic of *D. chrysippus*, only one was taken - with a delay of nine seconds; so mimicry seemed to work. However, the crowning element of the tests should have been the non-mimetic males of *H. misippus*; none of 26 males was even touched. The male underside and the abdomen do have some aposematic features, but half were offered only with the upperside showing, and they are just black with big white oval spots. I have no idea why they were refused.

Clearly Margrethe showed great powers of discrimination and full consistency in her choices, and there were certainly also learning processes. She once sampled a very toxic *Phymaeus* grasshopper, to her evident disgust, and never touched one again. She completely rejected *Acraea* species brought down from north that were not found in Gaborone, so she must have generalized as well (the full story can be found in Larsen, T.B. 1992. *Tropical Lepidoptera*, 3:101-104).

I had hoped to continue the experiments with models rather than real butterflies, but that was not to be. Both Nancy and I went on long business trips (Bangladesh and Belize respectively, I think) and when we got back there were bad news. Margrethe died from overexertion after laying more than 30 unfertilized eggs while in care with friends.

The only other large chameleon we found before leaving Botswana was an irascible male that hissed and scratched and never ate anything at all in captivity. Nancy and I both missed the morning feeding ritual and not least Margrethe's reaction when we offered her yet an *Acraea*; she would throw a quick glance at the offer with one eye, then swivel the other towards us with a look that clearly said: 'Come on guys ... not again!'.— TORBEN B. LARSEN, UNDP Vietnam, c/o Palais des Nations, 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland. (E-mail: torbenlarsen@compuserve.com).

Further observations and comment on the flight times of the Straw Dot moth *Rivula sericealis* (Scop.) (Lep.: Noctuidae) from a rural garden on the Norfolk/Suffolk border

Although Colin Plant suggests that "data sets obtained from a single site are probably too small to permit a proper analysis, even if the trap was run on every night" (*antea.* 33), I think some detail taken from the last 20 years of almost daily records from my south Norfolk garden can add to the current discussion on the voltinism and time of flight for the Straw Dot *Rivula sericealis*.

The species first appeared as a singleton in my trap on the 13 October 1984 and, with hindsight, I believe that late date is significant in indicating cyclical population fluctuations for the species, but not necessarily at this site at that time. There is a

suggestion from Bretherton and Chalmers-Hunt (1983, *Ent. Rec.* **95:** 92 & 151) that at times the Straw Dot may migrate some distance, although not necessarily from abroad. With no sighting in 1985 the Straw Dot was next seen in 1986 and from then the length of the recorded flight time(s) has generally increased to 2003, but with a noticeably lean period from 1996 to 1998 (or perhaps a year or so longer), as shown in table 1 below. It is not certain when the lean period ended, since there are gaps for 1988/1989 and 1999/2000. The traps were not run after the start of each of these periods as I was unable to find any way of combating the problem caused by birds entering the traps at around dawn and decimating the catch, other than turning off the traps. After two years the culprits had either "forgotten" or, more likely, had died and recording was resumed.

The dates in the Table are shown as day/month, the days are the duration of each flight period and are inclusive and the gap shows days between flight periods, where appropriate. Whilst there is just over a month difference (32 days) between the first record in 1987 and that in 2003 there are only four days between first sightings in 1992 and 2003. Similarly the first appearance of the second flight period in 2003 is 44 days earlier than it was in 1987 but only three days earlier than in 1995 and I would suggest that no conclusion as to change in flight time can be drawn from these figures except to say it probably varies with population levels, weather conditions etc.

However the progression from the sighting of a singleton in October in 1984 to an obviously distinct third flight period in both 2002 and 2003 does seem to have some significance. The record from 1984 together with the singleton seen in October 1996 may indicate the propensity for more "broods" with this species, when conditions are suitable and numbers are comparatively high, a propensity which has become more obvious at Scole in 2002 and 2003. But the question must be asked as to whether these sightings represent distinct broods of just separate flight periods. Buckler (1901. *The Larvae of the British Butterflies and Moths*, Vol. 9, p. 8) noted that "on the 21st February 1882, the air became suddenly warm, and many of the larvae awoke from their long sleep" but adds they soon became torpid when colder weather returned and many then died. Such early breaking of the diapause followed by conditions that caused significant numbers of larvae to die may well explain the total lack of records for the first (June) flight period in 1990 and 1991 and only singletons being recorded in 1996 and 1997. The numbers of adult moths seen in the traps in the last couple of years (see 2003 flight chart below) would indicate a locally breeding population with three broods, but until a survey for larvae is carried out no firm conclusions can be drawn.

Until wild larvae, in various instars, are found at appropriate times of year, it can only be assumed there are currently three broods. With wood false-brome, *Brachypodium sylvaticum,* apparently the preferred larval foodplant as indicated in most current British literature, not found in particularly close proximity to the trapping site other grasses are probably utilised by the Straw Dot here. Skou (1991. *Nordens Ugler*) lists *Agropyron repens, Bromus* spp. and *Festuca* spp. as additional foodplants, which do all grow around the trapping site and Gerry Haggett (pers. comm.) has reared this species on *Holcus* spp., which again is well represented, so it should be possible to find and identify wild larvae at this site.

Table 1. Flight periods for the Straw Dot Moth from 1984 to 2003 at Scole in Norfolk.

Year	First Period			Gap	Second Period			Gap	Third Period		
	from	to	days	days	from	to	days	days	from	to	days
1984										13/10	1
1985	-	-			-	-			-	-	
1986		16/7	1	-		23/9	1		-	-	
1987	29/6	27/7	29	32	29/8	20/9	23		-	-	
1990	-	-	-		8/8	24/8	17		-	-	
1991	-	-	-		26/7	27/8	33		-	-	
1992	1/6	9/6	9	28	8/8	14/8	7		-	-	
1993	4/6	26/6	23	37	3/8	4/9	33		-	-	
1994	6/6	1/7	26	19	21/7	1/9	42		-	-	
1995	3/6	29/6	27	19	19/7	18/8	31		-	-	
1996		27/6	1	?	20/8	3/9	15	?		14/10	1
1997	10/6		1	?	10/8	18/8	9		-	-	
1998	15/6	19/6	5	55	14/8	16/8	3		-	-	
2001	5/6	5/7	31	36	11/8	2/9	23		-	-	
2002	2/6	28/6	27	29	28/7	31/8	35	19	20/9	30/9	11
2003	27/5	28/6	33	17	16/7	24/8	40	15	9/9	12/10	34

Dates when larvae are found, and at what instar(s), are required to confirm that the Straw Dot is triple brooded – at least at Scole at the moment. Ideally finding mature larvae from mid June to early July and again from late August to early September, as well as the usual late April early May period, is what is wanted. These dates are somewhat tentative as there must be differential growth rates and emergence times, but significant variation either in when mature larvae are found or the number of different instars found together would still leave questions to be answered.

I am grateful to Gerry Haggett for information on rearing the larvae of the Straw Dot and for helpful comment and criticism on an earlier draft of this note.— MIKE HALL, Hopefield, Norwich Road, Scole, Diss, Norfolk IP21 4DY.

Trichiusa immigrata Lohse (Col.: Staphylinidae) in numbers from straw in East Suffolk

This aleocharine rove beetle has spread rapidly following its discovery in Kent in 1992 (Heal, N. F. 1993. *Coleopterist* **2**: 218). It has chiefly been found in very small numbers in old dung heaps although there are two records of it being found in numbers; once in a Surrey grass-compost heap (Owen, J. A. *et al.* 1997. *Entomologist's Gaz.* **48**: 111–124) and once from composted household and garden waste (Welch, R. C. & Sadler, J. P. 2000. *Coleopterist* **9**: 54).